



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Date: March 2, 2006
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

CAT Members Attending:

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
 Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
 Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
 Steve Boschen, Valley Forward
 Jim Buster, Avondale
 Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
 Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
 Doris French, Laveen Village Planning Committee

Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
 Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
 David Lafferty, Tolleson
 Bob Moss, United Dairymen of Arizona
 Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7
 Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
 John D. Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
 Jim Stroger, Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School

Staff and Consultants:

Jack Allen, HDR
 Mike Bruder, ADOT
 Matt Burdick, ADOT
 Kelly Cairo, GCI
 Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR

Ken Davis, FHWA
 Amy Edwards, HDR
 Ralph Ellis, ADOT
 Theresa Gunn, GCI
 Bob Hazlett, MAG

Don Herp, COP
 Dan Lance, ADOT
 Steve Thomas, FHWA
 Bill Vachon, FHWA

Citizens:

Emily Bittner
 Troy Corder
 William Eastburn
 David Fultz

Jerry Leavitt
 Doug Murphy
 Kweilin Pupkin
 Corinne Purtill

William Ramsay
 Fred Ringlero
 Dave Swisher

Action Plan

Task/Activity	Who	When
Attempt to answer what would happen along 51 st Avenue if W55 is not built on. Would 51 st Avenue get worse?	Amy Edwards	April 6 CAT mtg.
Get resolution on why there are such economic impacts along W55, in light of the fact that it was the planned alignment.	Amy Edwards	April 6 CAT mtg.
Provide and review evaluation criteria statements.	Theresa Gunn	March 30 CAT mtg.

Welcome

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees and encouraged members of the public to review the Citizen Advisory Team handout, which includes a question and comment form on the back. She asked CAT members to indicate which public questions from the previous meeting should be added to the agenda. Additionally, she asked CAT members who wished to converse with members of the public to step to the back of the room in order to avoid interruptions during presentations.

Project Update

Matt Burdick reviewed outstanding reports that were not ready to be presented to the CAT, including:

- Traffic, and purpose and need
- Secondary and cumulative impacts
- Update to costs/right-of-way information
- Summary of public comments
- Matrix of impacts

He asked the CAT how many meetings, and the dates, during which they would like to convene. Following discussion, the CAT decided to meet March 30 and April 6 to review reports, and April 27 to evaluate the westside options. The group will meet again at the time of ADOT's westside announcement to discuss the decision and determine an eastside meeting schedule.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: We need information a week prior to the meetings, as was previously agreed to.

Response: We will follow up on this.

Comment: We need more air quality information.

Comment: Air quality information could wait for an eastside meeting. Nothing is going to change for the purpose of making a westside comparison.

Amy Edwards addressed questions posed at the previous CAT meeting. She also noted that MSAT guidance from FHWA continues to evolve, and the study team will continue to follow these issues.

Question: Do the home counts include new development in the Foothills area? **Response:** Foothills Reserve was platted and is counted. The area further west of this development was not in the Maricopa County assessor's information in November 2005. Additional right-of-way information will include this previously unplatted area.

Question: What is a "regional system?" **Response:** This refers to water in a watershed. The project must maintain water to the same water shed. **Reply:** It is a challenge in our area to hold on to the water we have. I don't understand how this would work. **Response:** For example, water would be held, then released to the Gila River at the same rate that it releases now.

Question: Where are the air quality monitoring locations? **Response:** Specific sites are available on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality website at www.azdeq.gov.

Outstanding Westside Issues

Amy Edwards asked CAT members to list any outstanding westside issues. She also reviewed some known outstanding issues including:

- Dobbins Road area is assumed partially depressed.
- There will be a local access meeting next week regarding how I-10 might be affected by each of the potential South Mountain alignments. The study team will provide follow up information to the CAT.
- Figures regarding number of employees will be updated. Businesses are sending in information to supplement the initial database review. There will also be additional information gathered at the upcoming I-10 access meetings.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: What about all costs, including right-of-way? **Response:** Right-of-way costs will be

provided at one of the two upcoming report review meetings. However, we won't have mitigation costs for some time.

Question: Will we receive new projected figures for construction costs? **Response:** These figures will be updated just before the draft EIS is issued. When the original information was presented, the report used costs that were current one week prior to the presentation.

Question: The cost of a retaining wall (at W55 and Van Buren) would not be included as a construction cost? **Response:** This is correct and is one evolving issue.

Question: There is an issue regarding what would happen along 51st Avenue if W55 is not built on. Would 51st Avenue air quality get worse? **Response:** This type of analysis is outside of the traditional scope, but we will discuss with ADOT.

Comment: No-build means there would be a range of options – improvements, light rail, or nothing.

Comment: I don't believe as much work has been done on the no-build option as others.

Comment: We've been told if there is no freeway (W55), a parkway will be built. The City does not dispute this. **Response:** We will pose the question to the City of Phoenix.

Question: Why are there such economic impacts along W55? If this was planned all along, why is there such an impact? **Response:** We will get resolution on this issue.

Question: Will a traffic study include the effects on other systems? **Response:** Yes.

Question: What about the I-10 reliever? **Response:** Since the I-10 reliever is part of the regional traffic plan, the traffic models assume it is built.

Comment: I heard that the city has told two other freeway studies not to look beyond 55th Avenue, in order to tie into South Mountain Freeway. **Response:** Once a South Mountain decision is made, both the SR 801 (I-10 reliever) and Avenida Rio Salado will alter study areas as necessary. This boundary is a temporary place holder.

Comment: I would like to see visuals of the traffic simulations, side-by-side, of the three I-10 connections.

Comment: How about seeing the video of the three alignments? **Response:** We will make the video available, but we don't plan to provide it as a presentation again.

SMCAT Evaluation Process

Gunn facilitated discussion regarding creating the remaining evaluation criteria. Following discussion, the CAT reached consensus that operational criterion was covered in the design criteria and the criterion should be relabeled to reflect this. Additionally, the safety criterion was eliminated, though it was noted that geographic proximity within a community regarding hazardous uses could be a safety criterion. The CAT reached consensus regarding the following criteria statements, which will be provided for review at the March 30 meeting.

Design and Operations

Maximize operational efficiency and minimize congestion at freeway system interchanges and improve functionality of regional freeway and street systems.

Project Cost

Cost should be a consideration: total cost of constructing the freeway is balanced with the gains and losses to the affected communities.

Quality of Life

The freeway will not interfere with everyday life while allowing convenient accessibility to community facilities with minimal impact to residential areas.

Air Quality

The design and location of any new freeway built will maximize traffic flow and minimize the impact to regional air quality.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: Won't a future I-10 reliever impact South Mountain the same way South Mountain would impact I-10? **Response:** South Mountain models assume that SR 801 is built, and SR 801 studies will include impacts to South Mountain. Studies on SR 801 are just beginning now.

Question: Will the cost of moving businesses be included in the report? **Response:** Yes, this will be included in the report prior to your evaluation. The only cost we won't be able to provide is mitigation costs. Noise barriers are included in construction costs. However, mitigation regarding minimizing harm to traditional cultural properties or South Mountain Park/Preserve are not included in construction costs.

Question: Who decides where a Park-and-Ride lot goes? **Response:** Cities make these decisions and ADOT coordinates with cities.

Comment: We should have an expert from the American Lung Association address health issues.

Comment: I don't see how this would affect our decision on where to build a freeway.

Comment: We need to look at air pollution in the entire community.

Written Comments/Questions Submitted by the Public:

Comments and questions received during the meeting are recorded here verbatim from forms received. Time permitted for all questions and comments to be read to the CAT, and Edwards provided responses or addressed the CAT as indicated.

David Fultz, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202

1. **Question:** Can the SMCAT team make a recommendation not to be selected as a hazardous cargo route for South Mountain Loop 202? **Response:** The CAT can make this recommendation, however, this is an ADOT decision.
2. **Question:** When doing the cost evaluation during the 3/2/06 SMCAT meeting wouldn't this criteria have to be used for all other future transportation issues to be fair to Ahwatukee residents? **Response:** The intent of the criteria is to use it for both the west and east sides.
3. **Question:** Using past history can you show SMCAT members to most to least expensive criteria items for building a highway, i.e. 1) land, 2) asphalt, 3) labor? **Response:** (Edwards asked the CAT if they would like to receive this information, and members indicated that they did not require this information.)
4. **Question:** In mid-November of 2002 ADOT held meetings showing the alignment, latest design and right-of-way for South Mountain Loop 202. Also shown were homes that were needed for this latest design to work. Is there a law in place where ADOT must tell the homeowners identified in the right-of-way if their homes will be demolished/purchased or if they will be left intact? **Response:** Once a corridor is adopted by the Regional Transportation Board, ADOT has 18 months to initiate a right-of-way purchase.
5. **Question:** Can you let the SMCAT members know of a proposed highway called the National Freight Corridor (i.e. from Tallahassee to San Diego) and how this would affect the air quality and traffic conditions in greater Phoenix area. **Response:** (Edwards asked the CAT if they would like to receive this information, and members indicated that they did not require this information.)
6. **Comment:** As of 2:00 p.m. the day of the SMCAT meeting 3/2/06 I didn't see the summary (meeting minutes) posted. I felt this is unfair for the public that would attend the SMCAT

meetings. Please put some procedure or policy in place to at least let the public find out what happened at the last meeting before attending the next.

7. **Question:** On the South Mountain Loop 202 corridor study web page ADOT states, “Typically, the reported number of homes and businesses goes down as the study progresses, the locations affected may change as well.” What does this last statement mean for Ahwatukee homes that fall inside the present right-of-way for South Mountain Loop 202? **Response:** (Mike Bruder explained as follows:) As we move forward with the design process, the right-of-way is further refined. We attempt to show the worst case scenario – that with the most right-of-way.
8. **Question:** Can the SMCAT members abstain from voting if they do not agree with any of the three alignments rather than the no-build option? **Response:** Once a CAT member begins the evaluation process, they must complete it. However, a CAT member could opt out of the evaluation entirely.

William Ramsay

Comment: SMCAT members should not be evaluating westside alternatives based on accounting costs (those direct costs such as material and labor). Instead, SMCAT members should be evaluating alternatives based on economic costs, specifically, externalities and social costs impacting communities as a result of the proposed freeway. The same evaluation criteria should be applied to considering the eastern alignment. Accounting costs, along with safety considerations, are beyond the scope and control of SMCAT.

CAT Member Comment Cards

Statements shown below are recorded verbatim from comment cards:

- Current traffic levels on Pecos at 40th, 32nd, 24th, and Desert Foothills Blvd.
- ADOT should detail for us the number of schools adjacent to freeways. (Schools built next to freeways/freeways built next to schools.) And, how many schools have been built or are planned to be built near an existing freeway?
- Does SMCAT follow the construction of the freeway to its completion or to a specific point before completion?
- Can the evaluation criteria be emailed to us when as soon as it is revised?
- Is there a minimum distance that a school should be from a freeway? Or, is there a “safe” distance in terms of air quality that a school should be from a freeway?
- Can we bring in experts like: 1) American Lung Association, 2) American Medical Association, 3) American Cancer Society.
- Video of routes for review prior to our evaluation.
- Simulation of I-10 connections (vissim or sim software) (side-by-side).
- For the westside alternatives, what happens at each one if no-build?
- All costs?
- Costs: W55 retaining wall at the tank farm (homeland security).
- Tunnels – a viable option used worldwide (France, Italy, Colorado, East Coast) time to revisit in a meaningful way.
- ADOT should meet with eastside residents (in the future) to discuss local access issues for residents, schools, business. (Same as March 7/8 meetings with westside local access on I-10.)

Adjourn:

The next CAT meeting will be held Thursday, March 30, 2006 at 5:30 p.m. at the Learning Center Meeting Hall, Komatke Center, in District Six.